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ABSTRACT

A study investigated different cultural perceptions of the appropriateness of advice-giving in native speakers of English (NSs) and non-native speakers (NNSs). Using a questionnaire, 172 NNS college students and 31 NS college students were administered a questionnaire in which 16 everyday situations involving either social superiors or peers were presented and several options for appropriate speech acts were offered. In each case, the choices were among (1) direct advice involving the modal "should," (2) hedged advice using "need to" or other softeners or hedging devices, lexical hedging ("maybe, I think"), or questions, and (3) indirect comment including no advice or suggestions. Results indicate that NSs and NNSs have similar perceptions of the social distance in situations with a superior or peer, but show substantial differences in the patterns of advice they viewed as the best choice. NNSs chose to advise the superior and peer with frequency and on topics that would not be considered appropriate in the Anglo-American culture. It is suggested that NNSs have a different goal orientation than NSs and may compensate for lack of access to appropriate second-language communicative and solidarity strategies by using accessible first- and second-language knowledge of politeness rules in inappropriate ways. Contains 52 references. (MSE)

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Appropriateness of Advice as L2 Solidarity Strategy*

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Abstract

Researchers have established that advice-giving is an intrinsically face threatening act in the Anglo-American culture. However, NSs of English and NNSs may view the appropriateness of giving advice differently and use it with different communicative goals. This study focuses on the differences in native speaker and non-native speaker judgments of situations in which giving advice is appropriate and the forms which this advice can take. In a survey based on written role-plays, NNSs and NSs similarly recognized the difference in social distance between a peer acquaintance and an authority figure, but in both contexts, NNSs chose substantially more direct and hedged advice than did NSs. L2 learners are not necessarily aware of the negative politeness impact in L2 of advice-giving, a strategy often viewed positively in several L1s, and they need to be taught conversational strategies more appropriate in L2.

INTRODUCTION

English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers and people who frequently interact with non-native speakers (NNSs) have noticed that NNSs often give personal advice which would be considered inappropriate in the Anglo-American culture. Some observed examples of such advice, given to teachers, are found in (1-3):

(1) Why don't you have any children? You are married, you have a job, you should have children.

(2) You smoke too much. You do not need to smoke, you can chew gum or something. You drink too much coffee, too.

(3) You should learn how to type on a computer instead of typing on a typewriter. Nobody types on the typewriter any more.

Similarly, in peer-group conversations, it is unlikely that statements such as (4-6) would be met with enthusiasm:

(4) You should drive more carefully. You are going too fast.

(5) You should learn how to play basketball better because you don't play very well.

(6) If you eat donuts, you'll get fat. You shouldn't eat sweet food all the time, it's not good for you.

Giving advice is a complex speech act in which many sophisticated and culture-bound social, linguistic, and behavioral concepts come into play. Brown & Levinson (1987:65) describe giving advice as an "intrinsically face threatening" act where the speaker indicates that he or she does not intend to avoid impeding the addressee's freedom of action. The authors further note that the degree to which advice is a face-threatening act varies among cultures depending on the social distance between the speaker and the addressee, the measure of power which the addressee has over the speaker, and the politeness strategies considered appropriate in a particular culture. On the other hand, Matsumoto (1993) indicates that in

Japanese, a face-threat is not occasioned by an imposition on the addressee's freedom of action but by an imbalance in the rank relation of the speaker and the addressee. From this perspective, the actual speech act of advice may not be interpreted as face-threat.

Over the past two decades, numerous studies of complex speech acts have demonstrated that L2 learners' communicative competence heavily relies on their cultural competence. Bentahila & Davies (1989) distinguish between linguistic knowledge and knowledge of behavior associated with the target language culture. Bardovi-Harlig *et al.* (1990) state that learners who do not use pragmatically-appropriate language may appear rude and insulting. Many researchers (Blum-Kulka 1989; Olshtain 1983, 1989; Takahashi & Beebe 1987; Wolfson 1988) have investigated transfer of communicative routines from L1 to L2. Their inquiries testify that politeness strategies transferred from L1 to L2 are seldom successful. Some studies indicate that a speech act can perform different communicative functions in different cultures (Lii-Shih 1988; Matsumoto 1988; Graham 1990). When this is the case, communication is particularly prone to difficulties and even break-downs. Blum-Kulka (1982, 1983) proposes that learners may rely on knowledge of appropriate L1 speech acts and expect to find equivalent pragmatic rules in L2, which may not exist. Similarly, almost all Koike's (1989) subjects transferred L1 rules of politeness to L2. She also found that in more complex pragmatic situations, a higher number of subjects relied on L1 rules of politeness.

This study proposes that NNSs who transfer L1 rules of appropriateness to L2 interactions are not necessarily aware of their impact in L2 culture. Specifically, NNSs may utilize giving advice as a rapport-building strategy with a variety of purposes akin to the purposes of NS small talk and/or conversation-making devices which show solidarity and affirmation. The giving of advice can be perceived as rude by NSs; however, merely informing NNSs of its inappropriateness does not

provide them with knowledge of pragmatically-acceptable conversational formulae.

The transfer of rules of politeness and the discourse functions of giving advice, unlike other L2 speech acts, has been examined only to a very limited extent. Altman (1990) attributes NNS advice-giving to their misunderstanding of modal verb meanings. In view of her data, inappropriate usage of modals in English may account for some NNS advice-giving. However, additional explanations for NNS use of advice-like statements and routines can lie in the pragmatics of appropriateness and politeness. The results of this study indicate that NNSs give advice significantly more freely and frequently than NSs with the implication that such speech acts are not viewed as a face threat in cultures other than Anglo-American (Brown & Levinson 1987; Crane 1978; Matsumoto 1993; Nydell 1987). That NNSs utilize the giving of advice as a strategy for attaining communicative goals different from those of NSs will also be discussed.

ADVICE-GIVING IN L1 CULTURES

Some researchers have found that NSs and NNSs may utilize conversational routines for different communicative goals (Goody 1978). Wolfson (1989) observes that studies of unsuccessful L2 discourse frequently assume that situations eliciting certain speech acts are viewed similarly among cultures. She cautions that such assumptions can undermine the validity of the cross-linguistic analysis because cultural differences extend to a deeper level than the speech act, i.e. to culturally-defined notions and concepts. Coulmas (1981) asserts that interactional routines are determined by the norms and social frameworks of the speech community. According to him, the equivalence of speech acts in different languages cannot be easily assessed in terms of their communicative functions.

Lii-Shih (1988), Hinkel (1994a), and Kitao (1989) establish that even NNSs with highly advanced L2 linguistic competence sometimes choose inappropriate L2

politeness strategies. Masuda (1989:42) indicates that to the Japanese, with their strong sense of group cohesiveness, offering advice "shows warm interest in the other's well-being" whereas Americans often see it as invasion of their privacy. She cautions her Japanese audience that Japanese interactions are based on the assumption that "what concerns one of us, concerns all of us" (p. 43) and warns that statements such as *Why aren't you married* and *You should have children* are inappropriate in American culture. Matsumoto (1993) and Lebra (1976) describe a series of speech acts which, in Japanese, establish one's group belonging and have the goal of expressing empathy. The giving of unsolicited advice occupies a prominent place among the empathy strategies when the speaker attempts to predict the addressee's needs and wants, often expressed in the form of suggestions or advice. Lebra (1976) comments that non-committal advice, as in *Maybe, you shouldn't buy such a big car,* does not actually have the purpose of changing the addressee's mind but rather conveys the speaker's intentions to express benevolence and solidarity. In general, the greater the empathy and interest, the more the advice and suggestions that are made (Masuda 1989; Lebra 1976).

Park (1979) observes that the Korean concept of propriety and privacy in discourse is rather distant from American and allows for giving advice on matters which native speakers of English view as intensely private. The fact that Koreans frequently provide unsolicited advice and suggestions may be explained by what Crane (1978:25-27) and Park (1979:89) call "kibun," i.e. every Korean's sense of responsibility for harmonious and explicitly friendly interpersonal relationships between him/herself and others. Koreans tend to suggest alternatives and give advice to show their benevolence and involvement in the addressee's interests as well as to express divergent views without directly disagreeing (Park 1979). Crane (1978) observes that the lower one's social status the more *kibun* one has to demonstrate in relationship with social superiors.

According to Hu & Grove (1991) and Lii-Shih (1988), in Chinese, the use of interrogatives is the primary politeness strategy for softening utterances, closely followed by the use of hedging devices, such as *it seems, I suppose, a little bit,* and *I have a feeling.* Usually, the use of interrogatives and hedging devices is considered an appropriate and common politeness strategy. In one of Lii-Shih's examples (p. 88), *I have a feeling that it is not right for you to do it that way,* the hedge *I have a feeling* makes the utterance polite and appropriate. The author concedes, however, that utilizing a hedging device in English may not be sufficient to make the statement equally polite. The author further states that in Chinese, personal questions, suggestions, and advice "are gestures of friendliness, concern, admiration or interest" (Lii-Shih 1988:168). She goes on to say that because of the different ways small-talk and rapport-building activities are carried out in different cultures, such speech acts can often be interpreted by Americans as intrusive. In her view, L2 pragmatic failure often results when Chinese employ L1 solidarity speech acts in L2.

In Indonesian culture, advice is given largely as an expression of friendliness and/or concern. The situations which provide a cause for concern and warrant the giving of advice are subject to the speaker's judgment (Smith-Hefner 1988). Because Indonesian society is highly stratified, the use of advice-giving speech acts depends directly on the social status of the speaker's and the addressee's, gender, age, occupation, and even the place of birth and/or the number of children. The higher the speaker's status relative to that of the addressee, the more suggestions and advice politeness the speaker can use. On the other hand, these are interpreted as expressions of solidarity among peers, and unsolicited advice can be given more freely (Brown & Levinson 1987).

El-Sayed (1990) and Nydell (1987) emphasize the elaborate rapport-building speech acts which are prevalent in Arabic culture and that serve as a means of

establishing group-belonging. In Arabic, the giving of advice is not only an expression of friendliness but this speech act also largely conveys benevolence and support (El-Sayed 1990). Topics which are considered private are subject to cultural interpretation, and such issues as financial matters, children, health, physical comfort and well-being, personal contentment, and professional qualifications are openly discussed (Nydell 1987). Nydell notes that turning down advice on what Americans would consider private matters can be met with a sense of bewilderment and rejection. For example, El-Sayed (1990) observes that in Arabic, advice can be given in situations in which an American would be expected to say nothing. He also states that "cases where two languages share formulas with identical content and function seem to be relatively rare" (p. 11).

Condon (1987) and Devine (1982) investigated politeness strategies employed in some Spanish-speaking cultures. Their findings indicate that while the speaker is expected to minimize a potential face-threat, the notions of how this can be accomplished differ between speakers of English and Spanish. Condon (1987) asserts that a potential threat to the addressee's face can be entailed in the giving of personal advice among Mexican speakers of Spanish. However, he further comments that what represents a personal matter is subject to cultural variance, and in Spanish, family, physical appearance and well-being, and job-related topics are not viewed as private. In some Spanish-speaking cultures, the giving of advice on impersonal matters can be used as a complex politeness strategy of providing affirmation when the speaker says what he or she thinks the addressee wants to hear -- and doing so in a somewhat exaggerated fashion (Condon 1987; Devine 1982). Thus, when speakers of Spanish give advice on what they perceive to be impersonal matters, in L2 they may threaten the addressee's face without being aware of the impact this speech act can have.

THE STUDY AND THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Research in L2 learner perceptions of what represents appropriate communicative routines is limited to observations of conversations or collecting data obtained through oral or written role plays (Wolfson 1986; Takahashi & Beebe 1987). This study is based upon written role-plays. An inherent limitation of role-plays as a data gathering instrument is that they may not reflect one's linguistic behavior in actual, realistic situations (Takahashi & Beebe 1987). An additional limitation of written role-plays is the absence of kinesic information.

While discourse completion tests and open-ended instruments are frequently prone to problems associated with interpreting subjects' responses (Rose 1992; 1994) and controlling for peripheral linguistic variables (Rintell & Mitchell 1989), multiple-choice questionnaires, within limitations, have been proven to be a more effective measure of subjects' judgments of appropriateness (Bouton 1989; Hinkel 1994b; Koike 1989). This study is based upon written role-plays in a multiple-choice format.

A NS control group was deemed essential for verifying the appropriateness of advice in American conversational routines. This study focuses on the differences in NS and NNS judgments of situations in which giving advice is appropriate and the forms which it can take.

Two personages were briefly outlined in the questionnaire situations: a social superior i.e. a college teacher with whom the participants were familiar in a professional capacity only, and a peer acquaintance. The questionnaire consisted of 16 situations: eight involved statements addressed to the social superior, and eight to the peer acquaintance. The 16 situations presented to the study participants dealt with everyday events, such as being caught in the rain or receiving a low grade on an exam.

In the questionnaire, the situations and the multiple-choice options followed

the theoretical frameworks for advice-giving speech acts established by Bach & Harnish (1979), Brown & Levinson (1987), and Wardhaugh (1985). The modal verbs used in the multiple-choice selections to indicate different direct or hedged advice were based on the findings of Altman (1990), Coates (1983), Hermeren (1978), and Quirk (1985). Pragmatic, lexical, and structural parameters associated with indirectness in advice-giving rely on research by Brown & Levinson (1987), Huebler (1983), Levinson (1993), and Shimanoff (1977).

Each item in the questionnaire adhered to the same format: a situation was briefly described; following the situation, three multiple-choice selections were presented. One of the choices was direct advice (DA), relying on the use of *should* (Altman 1990; Hermeren 1978) without hedging (Huebler 1983). One of the choices offered softened and hedged advice (HA), often using *need to* (Coates 1983; Hermeren 1978) and one or more softeners and hedging devices, e.g. impersonal constructions *(it's better, it's a good idea)*, lexical hedging *(maybe, I think)*, or questions (Huebler 1983; Quirk *et al.* 1985). The other choice of the three was an indirect comment (IC), which included no advice or suggestions and in which speakers intentions are not made explicit (Bach & Harnish 1979; Levinson 1993; Shimanoff 1977). Indirectness means that "there is more than one unambiguously attributable intention" so that the speaker cannot be seen as having one particular intent (Brown & Levinson 1987:69). Examples of direct and hedged advice, and indirect comments are found in (7-9), respectively:

(7) You should study more to improve your grades. This course is not easy.

(8) Maybe, you need to study more. This course is not easy.

(9) This course is not easy. I have to study a lot for it.

All situations and the possible advice statements in the questionnaire consist of examples of observed and recorded data in NNS conversations with their instructors and peers. In the situations and the accompanying possible statements,

all references to gender, age, nationality, and native language were avoided; no pronouns, except the first person singular and second person singular were used.

SUBJECTS

All participants of the study were enrolled at the Ohio State University. Of the 203 students, 84 were speakers of Chinese (Ch), 33 Japanese (J), 16 each of Korean (K) and Indonesian (I), 13 Arabic (A), and 10 Spanish (S). In addition, 31 NSs of American English, raised in Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana were included as a control group.

The NNSs represented a highly advanced group of language learners with a mean Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) score of 593. Their residence in the U.S. typically fell within the range of 1 to 4 years, with a mean of 1.6. It follows that all NNSs had had some exposure to the host culture and appropriate L2 conversational routines.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the survey are listed in Tables 1 and 2, which contain NS and NNS responses in eight situations of interaction with a social superior (a college instructor) and similar data describing peer interaction. In both tables, the topics covered in the role-play situations show the responses given by the NSs and NNSs, collectively and by L1 groups. The data are arranged in order from situations in which NNSs chose the least advice to those in which they selected the most advice. Table 1 presents subjects' responses addressed to a social superior and a peer acquaintance in parallel situations on similar topics to allow for a direct comparison of values. Table 2 shows the data for responses in different situations.

The subjects' responses to the situations in the questionnaire were grouped by respondents' L1s and re-arranged by rank. A Friedman's Rank Test was utilized in a

two-way classification for intergroup and intersituation variability. Since subjects' responses in each situation were not independent (the percentage of subjects selecting the 3 choices must sum to 100%), computations were performed only for DA responses. When testing for differences, care was taken to perform separate tests for subjects' DA responses in the situations with a social superior and a peer acquaintance.

The null hypothesis for Friedman's Rank Test is that the NNS subjects are drawn from a common population such that the effect of situations on NNSs' behavior is zero, i.e. the responses are unstratified with respect to context. The results of the tests indicate that there are real and significant differences, independent of the questionnaire situations, between the judgments of subjects in various L1 groups. Specifically, the test statistics for subjects' responses in 16 situations were statistically significant for both the social superior and the peer acquaintance ($p < .001$) data sets (Table 1 and 2), and the null hypothesis can be rejected.

Table 1

Advice to Social Superior and Peer in Similar Situations

	Advice to Social Superior N = 203								Advice to Peer Acquaintance N = 203							
	NS	NNS	Ch	J	K	I	A	S	NS	NNS	Ch	J	K	I	A	S
	31	172	84	33	16	16	13	10	31	172	84	33	16	16	13	10
	%	X_w%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	X_w%	%	%	%	%	%	%
(1) Physical comfort in bad weather																
DA	0	15.8	13	22	31	12	8	10	1	15.9	10	24	25	19	31	0
HA	10	29.1	36	9	25	44	15	40	13	42.1	41	33	44	63	54	30
IC	90	55.1	51	69	44	44	77	50	86	42.0	49	43	31	18	15	70
(2) Convenience of working/study environment																
DA	0	17.5	18	18	38	6	15	0	22	35.1	30	52	38	25	31	40
HA	0	17.4	13	18	25	25	23	20	16	39.3	45	27	37	31	46	40
IC	100	65.1	69	64	37	69	62	80	62	25.6	25	21	25	44	23	20
(3) Managing one's time																
DA	0	17.8	14	33	25	6	15	10	4	13.2	13	15	6	25	15	0
HA	13	36.9	37	28	38	57	23	50	10	30.8	30	33	56	25	23	10
IC	87	45.3	49	39	37	37	62	40	86	56.0	57	52	38	50	62	90
(4) Working too hard																
DA	0	31.3	29	37	38	31	33	20	0	9.9	12	3	19	0	15	10
HA	3	25.3	29	25	56	6	0	10	13	38.0	43	52	31	38	8	0
IC	97	43.4	42	38	6	63	67	70	87	52.1	45	41	50	62	77	90

The values listed in the NNS column are weighted averages of the six L1 groups which were used to compensate for the unequal representation of L1 groups in the sample. The values were obtained by multiplying the percentage value for each L1 group in the NNS sample where the weighted average is the proportioned sum of values for the six L1 groups.

One thing that is immediately clear from Tables 1 and 2 is that, on the average, NNSs consistently chose advice to the superior and the peer acquaintance around 25 to 50% more frequently than NSs. NNSs selected more hedged and direct advice to both the social superior and the peer than did NSs. It is worth noting that the differences in the values were consistent for the two types of addressee. NSs and NNSs were consistent in their perceptions of the social distance between themselves and the two types of address, superior and peer.

Table 2

Advice to Social Superior and Peer in Different Situations

	Advice to Social Superior N = 203								Advice to Peer Acquaintance N = 203							
	NS	NNS	Ch	J	K	I	A	S	NS	NNS	Ch	J	K	I	A	S
	31	172	84	33	16	16	13	10	31	172	84	33	16	16	13	10
	%	X_w%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	X_w%	%	%	%	%	%	%
(5a) Long commute									*(5b) Vehicle safety*							
DA	0	9.5	11	12	19	0	0	0	6	29.2	25	61	38	6	8	10
HA	0	41.5	42	34	56	56	31	30	26	44.9	48	27	37	69	62	30
IC	100	49.0	47	54	25	44	69	70	68	25.9	27	12	25	25	30	60
(6a) Whether to have children									*(6b) Eating too much junk food*							
DA	0	11.4	9	0	44	25	8	0	13	16.7	13	12	31	25	15	30
HA	0	12.8	12	24	19	0	8	0	16	25.1	32	37	19	0	8	0
IC	100	75.8	79	76	37	75	84	100	71	58.2	55	51	50	75	77	70
(7a) Whether to replace an old car									*(7b) Menu choice*							
DA	0	22.8	24	21	19	13	23	40	0	8.6	1	15	25	19	8	10
HA	0	21.9	21	27	38	13	23	0	36	52.6	58	39	56	56	54	40
IC	100	55.3	55	52	43	74	54	60	64	38.8	41	46	19	25	38	50
(8a) Improving foreign language skills									*(8b) Difficult academic course*							
DA	0	29.4	21	39	44	31	54	10	0	15.2	10	30	31	0	23	0
HA	0	12.4	17	0	6	13	8	30	16	39.6	45	22	50	50	23	40
IC	100	58.2	62	61	50	56	38	60	84	45.2	45	48	19	50	54	60

The values in Tables 1 and 2 indicate that NSs chose advice selectively, and usually preferred hedging, a result consistent with other findings (Carrell & Konneker 1981; Fraser & Nolen 1981). NSs made a noticeable distinction between the superior and the peer. In the scenarios involving the college instructor (Tables 1and 2), NSs strongly preferred indirect comments.

The appropriateness of advice is largely dependent on context (Brown & Levinson 1987), and the topic of the situation had a significant impact on the selection. In interactions with a superior, in contexts of working/study environment (2) and managing one's time (3) in Table 1, *whether to have children* (6a), or financial matters (*whether to replace the old car*) (7a) in Table 2, NSs unanimously choose an indirect comment. In response to some topics (*physical comfort in bad weather* and *working too hard*) (1 and 3, Table 1), several NNSs chose hedged to the social superior, affirming the value of the superior's well-being and time. The majority of NSs (Tables 1 and 2) preferred indirect comments in situations with both the superior and the peer, and in almost all categories, except (2) in Table 2, their advice was predominantly hedged.

On the basis of a large body of evidence, D'Souza (1988:159) concludes that it is a "fact that there are pan-South Asian notions of politeness" and that cultural unity is prominent in the area. Therefore, it is not surprising that among the six groups of NNSs, speakers of Spanish and Arabic responded to the situations differently than other NNSs and most nearly like NSs. They were followed, in descending order, by the speakers of Indonesian, Chinese, and Japanese; speakers of Korean deviated the most from the responses of NSs. The topic of having children (6a) in Table 2 is probably the most personal from the NSs perspective. The largest percentage of NNSs to select an indirect comment did so in response to this topic -- 75.8%. Even here, though, a large percentage of the Koreans opted for direct advice (44%). In almost all situations, a majority of Koreans preferred advice to either

type of the addressee, consistent with the forms that "kibun" (Crane 1978; Park 1979) can take and its purpose of expressing explicit benevolence and support.

Two systematic factors are apparent in the data analysis: NSs and NNSs very similarly perceive the social distance in situations with the superior and a peer. On the other hand, both NSs and NNSs demonstrate substantial differences in the patterns of advice they viewed as the best choice: NNSs chose advice to the superior and the peer with a frequency and on topics which would not be considered appropriate in the Anglo-American culture.

It is reasonable to propose a three-tier hypothesis regarding the differences in NS and NNS views on the appropriateness of advice in casual conversational behavior:

(1) NSs and NNSs view the appropriateness of advice differently;

(2) in L2 situations, NNSs give advice with different goal-orientations, i.e. for different means-end relationships than NSs (Goody 1978); and

(3) NNSs often compensate for their lack of access to appropriate L2 communicative and solidarity strategies by making use of accessible L1 and L2 knowledge of rules of politeness in inappropriate ways (Blum-Kulka 1982, 1983).

TEACHING APPROPRIATE CONVERSATIONAL FORMULAE

Further investigation of NNSs speech acts of giving advice is undoubtedly necessary. However, if NNSs indeed use giving advice as a means of showing interest and establishing friendly relationships, then, within the format of the L2 culture, it is unlikely that this pragmatic communicative function can be successful. For this reason, L2 students need to be taught appropriate speech act routines and topics, associated with appropriateness and solidarity (Carrell & Konneker 1981), so that their goal-oriented strategies can be effective.

Inasmuch as people frequently assume that their values and perceptions are shared by others (Ruben 1987), NNSs may not be aware that their speech acts of

interest and friendliness can be perceived as the intrusive giving of advice. Learning culturally-appropriate expressions of interest and friendliness begins with self-awareness and non-judgmental observation (Gaston 1984). Teachers can heighten students' awareness of L1 politeness strategies which are utilized for L2 communication and which may be perceived differently by NSs. Once NNSs are cognitively aware of their communicative goals and can evaluate the effectiveness of their strategies (Goody 1978), they can effectively establish initial appropriate topic-related frameworks, conversational routines, and solidarity strategies.

Because few culture-training materials exist (Brislin, *et al.*, 1986), both NNSs and their instructors are faced with an unexplored domain of language teaching, i.e. what specifically represents pragmatically-appropriate formulae for expressing interest and conducting conversation. In general, however, it is important to mention that, in many Anglo-American cultures, each individual is presumed to be the best judge of his/her circumstances. Giving personal advice and making suggestions implies a close relationship and trust (Wardhaugh 1985). Performing such speech acts when closeness and trust are lacking can make one appear presumptuous (Altman 1990).

Usually in the Anglo-American culture, it is not the personal topic of the conversation that projects interest and friendliness -- it is the very act of conversation-making (Wardhaugh 1985). Therefore, appropriate conversation topics can be external to both the speaker and the addressee; they can revolve around activities and events, rather than personalities. When addressing another with suggestions, understatements are strongly preferred (Huebler 1983); hedging devices in English are frequently associated with tentativeness and politeness (Quirk, *et al.* 1985; Brown & Levinson 1987).

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study establishes that in written role-plays, 172 highly advanced speakers of Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Indonesian, Arabic, and Spanish chose advice to the superior and the peer substantially more frequently than the NS control group. NSs and NNSs similarly recognized the social distance between the social superior and the peer. Nevertheless, NNSs opted for substantially more direct and hedged advice to the superior than did NSs.

Research of L1 conversational routines and appropriateness demonstrates that, in many cultures, the notion of giving advice may be viewed as an expression of friendliness and interest, i.e. a conversational routine and/or a rapport-building activity, which is, however, considered inappropriate in some English-speaking cultures. Therefore, it appears that, in L2 speech acts of friendliness, NNSs rely on their L1 judgments of conversational appropriateness and politeness and need to be taught the topics and formulae pragmatically-appropriate in L2.

NOTE

*Versions of this paper have been presented at the 6th International Conference on Pragmatics and Language Learning, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, Illinois (April, 1992) and the TESOL Convention, Baltimore, Maryland (March, 1994).

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APPENDIX

The Questionnaire

Several situations are described in the items below. Following the description of a situation, you will find a multiple choice selection of possible statements. Please choose the one which you think could best be said in the described situation.

When you are responding to the situations, please keep in mind the following imaginary student:

K.C. is a student in your department. You have similar interests in your majors. You have talked to K.C. several times in the department lounge.

Also, please keep in mind the following imaginary college instructor:

There is an instructor in your department with whom you have similar professional interests. You have talked to this instructor several times in the department lounge.

SITUATIONS

1. On a cold winter day, you are walking to class together with the instructor. The instructor looks cold. You can say to the instructor:

(A) You should buy a warm coat and hat. Then you wouldn't be so cold.

(B) It is really cold today.

(C) Maybe, you need to buy a warm coat and hat. Then you wouldn't be so cold.

2. K.C. is considering taking a course. You have heard that the course is really difficult. You can say to K.C.:

(A) I've heard that this course is really difficult.

(B) You shouldn't take this course. I've heard that it's really difficult.

(C) It's better not to take this course. I've heard it's really difficult.

3. One day, you walk out into the parking lot together with the instructor, and you notice that the instructor's car is really old. You can say to the instructor:

(A) You should buy a new car. This car has seen better days.

(B) Is this your car?

(C) Maybe, it's time for a new car. This car has seen better days.

4. K.C. is walking in the rain without an umbrella. K.C. looks wet. You can say to K.C.:

(A) You should use an umbrella. Then you wouldn't be so wet.

(B) This weather is terrible, isn't it?

(C) You are all wet. You need to use an umbrella when it's raining.

5. You know that the instructor is married but does not have any children. One day, the two of you are talking about children. You can say to the instructor:

(A) It's important to have children. You should have children.

(B) Don't you have any children? It's important to have children.

(C) I think it's important to have children.

6. K.C. eats potato chips all the time. You see K.C. eating them again. You can say to K.C.:

(A) You shouldn't eat potato chips all the time. They are not good for you.

(B) Potato chips are not good for you.

(C) Do you like potato chips?

7. You notice that there are many papers and books on the instructor's desk. In fact, there is no more room on it at all. You can say to the instructor:

(A) You should clean up your desk so that you can work at it.

(B) It looks like you have a lot of things on your desk.

(C) There are so many things on your desk. You need to clean it up.

8. You find out that the instructor speaks your native language. You have a little conversation. Your instructor's pronunciation is difficult to understand. You can say to the instructor:

(A) Pronunciation in my language is not easy.

(B) You should practice more to improve your pronunciation. Pronunciation in my language is not easy.

(C) Maybe, you need to practice more to improve your pronunciation. Pronunciation in my language is not easy.

9. You and K.C. are in a restaurant. While you are both looking at the menu and trying to choose what to order, K.C. says something about ordering a hamburger. You ordered a hamburger in this restaurant before and, in your opinion, it was really greasy. You can say to K.C.:

(A) You shouldn't order the hamburger. I had it here before, and it was really greasy.

(B) Maybe, it's not a good idea to order a hamburger. I had it here before, and it was really greasy.

(C) I had a hamburger here before, and it was really greasy.

10. You see K.C. working in the library very late in the evening. K.C. looks tired. You can say to K.C.:

(A) You should not work so hard. It's very late.

(B) Why do you work so hard? It's very late.

(C) I can never get much done so late at night.

11. You see the instructor working in the library very late in the evening. The instructor looks tired. You can say to the instructor:

(A) You should not work so hard. It's very late.

(B) Why do you work so hard? It's very late.

(C) I can never get much done so late at night.

12. K.C.'s assignment paper is due the next day. K.C. will have to stay up all night to write it. You can say to K.C.:

(A) You should start your papers earlier. It's hard to write a good paper overnight.

(B) It's better to start your papers earlier. It's hard to write a good paper overnight.

(C) It looks like you are going to be very busy tonight.

13. K.C. is studying in the library carol. You notice that there are many papers and books on the desk. In fact, there is no more room on it at all. You can say to K.C.:

(A) You should clean up your desk so that you can work at it.

(B) It looks like you have a lot of things on your desk.

(C) There are so many things on your desk. You need to clean it up.

14. The instructor is very busy preparing for a presentation the next day. You can say to the instructor:

(A) You should start your preparations earlier. It's hard to prepare at the last minute.

(B) It's better to start your preparations earlier. It's hard to prepare at the last minute.

(C) It looks like you are very busy.

15. K.C.'s car breaks down frequently. K.C. is planning on driving it to New York to see some relatives. You can say to K.C.:

(A) You should not take the car that is unreliable for such a long trip.

(B) You need to be careful when you are taking such a long trip in the car that is unreliable.

(C) Taking a long trip in a car that is unreliable may be risky.

16. You find out that the instructor drives 90 miles to work every day. You are surprised. You can say to the instructor:

(A) Every day? You should find a job closer to your house.

(B) Every day? It's better to find a job closer to your house.

(C) Every day? How long does the drive take you?